

Liberal Democratic Party Dissenting Report

1.1 Reducing smoking saves lives.

1.2 Notwithstanding plain packaging and the highest rates of tobacco taxation in the world, and contrary to the long term trend of declining smoking rates in Australia over previous decades, the rate of smoking in Australia has plateaued.

1.3 In contrast, the rate of smoking continues to decline in other countries, the UK and USA included, where plain packaging and such high taxation are not found.

1.4 The key difference between these countries and Australia is the availability of nicotine alternatives, in particular e-cigarettes.

1.5 While e-cigarettes are a relatively recent innovation, the effect on smoking rates of an acceptable nicotine alternative can be seen in Sweden, where the rate is just 5% (compared to 14% in Australia). This is attributed to the longstanding availability of snus, a form of powdered tobacco from which nicotine is absorbed orally.

1.6 Australia's prohibition policy towards e-cigarettes prevents Australian smokers from accessing a means of quitting smoking which is proving effective in other countries.

1.7 Anecdotal evidence from Australians who are privately importing e-cigarettes and liquid nicotine indicates the same success would be seen in Australia if they were widely available.

1.8 Private imports are denying Australian retailers an opportunity to generate sales, and the Australia government an opportunity to collect tax revenue.

1.9 New Zealand has recently decided to legalise the sale of e-cigarettes. Australia's continuation of a prohibition policy will be impossible to enforce.

1.10 The prohibition policy is costing lives; lives would be saved if e-cigarettes were widely available.

Recommendation 1

1.11 The Bill should be passed.

Senator David Leyonhjelm

